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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to obtain information concerning procedures and programs established by graduate schools for disadvantaged students. A questionnaire was sent to each of the 287 member institutions of the Council of Graduate Schools in the United States. Usable replies were received from 248, of which 150 supplied information about programs and procedures for disadvantaged students. The major findings were: (1) common methods of recruitment of students include sending literature to undergraduate schools, visiting campuses, and making personal contacts; (2) substantial numbers of graduate schools waive or liberalize the admissions requirements of previous scholastic records and test scores; (3) special remedial services are offered at many of the graduate schools; (4) the most frequently provided type of financial aid is partial or total tuition remission; (5) most of the special procedures and programs were established in 1967 or later; (6) many graduate schools report ten or fewer disadvantaged students enrolled; and, (7) most of the graduate schools reporting special procedures or programs feel that it is too early to evaluate their effectiveness; others reported that student achievement has been excellent and that the rate of attrition has been low. [Not available in hard copy due to the marginal legibility of the original document.] (RJ)

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PROGRAMS FOR DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS

IN GRADUATE SCHOOLS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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A Survey Conducted by

The Council of Graduate Schools in the United States

and

The Graduate Record Examinations Board

January, 1970

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FOREWORD

Special programs for graduate students from socially, educationally, and economically deprived circumstances have in the past several years been established in many colleges and universities. Such programs have been repeatedly discussed at the annual meetings of the Council of Graduate Schools and have been a matter of special concern to a standing committee of the Council. But in spite of widespread interest, it has been remarkably difficult to get even the most elementary information about them: their total number, numbers of students involved, methods of recruitment, sources of funding, remedial instruction, and so forth.

In response to frequent inquiries from member institutions, government agencies, and foundations, the Council of Graduate Schools, in cooperation with the Graduate Record Examinations Board and the help of Educational Testing Service, undertook to collect the needed information. A brief questionnaire, sent out to the 287 member institutions of CGS, produced an unexpectedly high number of returns. Mrs. Mary Ellen Parry of ETS collated and analyzed the replies and prepared a detailed report. This is being published as an ETS Project Report (PR-70-1) and will be available upon request to anyone who wishes to see it.

The present document is a summary of Mrs. Parry's report by Dr. Gerald V. Lannholm of ETS. In its condensed form it is intended to serve the needs of those who wish only a general outline of these programs rather than the greater detail of Mrs. Parry's report.

CGS, and the GRE Board wish to thank the 248 respondents -- generally graduate deans and their staffs -- for their prompt and willing cooperation. Without it, this study could not have been made.

Gustave O. Arlt

SUMMARY

The purpose of this study was to obtain information concerning procedures and programs established by graduate schools for disadvantaged students. The major findings were:

Common methods of recruitment include sending literature to undergraduate schools, visiting campuses, and making personal contacts. Faculty members are most active in the recruiting. Some graduate schools recruit nationally but many confine their efforts largely to certain states or regions.

Substantial numbers of graduate schools waive or liberalize the admissions requirements of previous scholastic records and test scores. Letters of recommendation are the most frequently used additional criteria for evaluating the applicants.

Special remedial services are offered at many of the graduate schools. Most commonly reported were tutoring, counseling and advising, and offering courses at the undergraduate level.

The most frequently provided type of financial aid is part or total tuition remission. Aid for fees, fellowships or assistantships, and occasional assistance for room rent and board are other types. The dollar value per student ranges up to $5,000. University funds are the most common source, followed by the Federal Government and a few foundations.

Most of the special procedures and programs were established in 1967 or later. Few changes have been made or are planned. Some plans include more money for the program, some expansion, and greater recruitment efforts.

Many graduate schools report 10 or fewer disadvantaged students enrolled. The number of such students has increased substantially in recent years.

Most of the graduate schools reporting special procedures or programs feel that it is too early to evaluate their effectiveness. Others reported that student achievement has been good or excellent and that the rate of attrition has been low.

These findings were obtained by means of a survey in which a questionnaire was sent to each of the 287 member institutions of the Council of Graduate Schools in the United States. Usable replies were received from 248, of which 150 supplied information about programs and procedures for disadvantaged students.

Introduction

There has been increasing emphasis in recent years on making higher education more accessible for disadvantaged students. Much has been written about the problems concerning disadvantaged students and higher education, but the emphasis has been largely on the undergraduate level. Examples of such literature include McGrath (1965), Gordon and Wilkerson (1966), Jaffe, Adams, and Meyers (1968), and Egerton (1968).

Less emphasis has been placed in the literature on accommodating disadvantaged students at the graduate school level. Paynter (1969) has written about graduate opportunities for black students, and Egerton (1969) has provided information on black enrollment at undergraduate and graduate levels. Anyone familiar with practices and trends in graduate education is aware that some special efforts have been made by some graduate schools to locate interested and qualified or potentially promising disadvantaged students. But little is known about the extent and nature of such programs.

It was with the hope of obtaining information about programs and procedures for disadvantaged students in graduate schools that the Graduate Record Examinations Board and the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) in the United States cooperatively undertook a survey of practices. This report presents the principal findings of that study.

Nature of the Study

A brief questionnaire consisting of 17 questions with an open-ended format was developed for this exploratory survey by CGS.

Three general areas were covered: (1) description of the program or procedures, including recruitment, admissions policies, remedial services, and financial aid; (2) the development of the program, plans for changes, and the number of disadvantaged students involved; and (3) estimation of student achievement and attrition.

The graduate schools were instructed to consider as disadvantaged students all who are in educationally, socially, or economically deprived circumstances. They were also asked to deal with the students so identified as a total group with no distinctions to be made with respect to racial or ethnic origins.

A copy of the questionnaire was sent to the graduate dean of each of the 287 member institutions of the Council of Graduate Schools. One follow-up mailing was made to those who had not replied after about four weeks. A total of 268 questionnaires were returned, 253 of which were considered usable. This total of 253 included a few letters which were submitted in lieu of completed questionnaires. Relevant information from these letters was tallied in the analysis. In most instances, the respondent was the graduate school dean. Since there were a few cases in which two or more departments in the same graduate school submitted separate replies, the number of different institutions represented by the usable returns was 248.

The Findings

The purpose of this survey was to learn not only how many graduate schools have established programs or procedures with respect to disadvantaged students but also to discover something about the nature

of the provisions which have been instituted. Accordingly, categories were established to assist in the classification of the practices reported. Most of these were based on analysis of the first 100 or so questionnaires received. Other categories were added later as appropriate.

The first item in the questionnaire asked: "Do you have any definable procedures (whether or not formalized into a program) for the accommodation of potential graduate students from deprived circumstances?" Those who responded "yes" were then asked to answer succeeding questions concerning their procedures.

A count of the responses to this primary question reveals that only 89, or 35 percent of the total usable questionnaires received, answered "yes" to this question. However, 47 of those responding "no" and 14 others who did not respond directly to this question supplied answers to other questions indicating the presence of some sort of procedures (not always "definable") for students from deprived circumstances. Therefore, all of these questionnaires were included in the analysis of subsequent questions, making a total of 150 which provided usable information about procedures or programs for disadvantaged students. This constitutes 59 percent of the 253 usable questionnaires received.

Recruitment and Admissions

Information concerning recruitment practices was sought through two questions, the first of which asked: "How are such students recruited? Describe." With respect to special sources used for

finding and identifying promising disadvantaged students, the Intensive Studies Summer Program was cited by eight respondents, and cooperative undergraduate programs were listed by three. The only other sources cited by more than one respondent were Upward Bound (two) and the Teacher Corps Program (two). Departments and faculty were mentioned most frequently (by 43) as responsible for the recruiting. Administrators (including deans) were named by 11, and students by nine respondents. Others named by fewer included the graduate school, graduates, and other specially designated recruiters. The recruiting method reported most frequently (by 26) was the distribution of literature to various campuses. This was followed in frequency by visits to campuses (by 21), personal contacts (by 19), informal liaisons with Negro colleges (by eight), and correspondence (by seven). Inviting groups to visit the campus and letters to or other contact with colleagues by faculty members were cited by several. The same graduate school may employ more than one of these methods. Twenty-six of the respondents made no reply to this question and 35 reported either no recruiting efforts or none which differ from those for other students.

A second question dealing with recruitment asked: "From what geographical areas recruited, if any?" About half of the respondents indicated that their schools recruit in specific areas, listing regions, certain states, cities, or types of locations, such as "local" or "urban". There were 43 who stated that their schools recruit nationally. Analysis of the replies by geographical areas revealed that it is common for an institution located in a particular region to recruit disadvantaged students from within its own region.

The states covered by the Southern Association and "the South" were the most frequently mentioned areas. Fifty-six of the graduate schools replying recruit from those regions.

A special set of questions was developed to determine the ability of disadvantaged students to meet normal requirements for graduate school admission. The first and general question was "Are any normal admission requirements waived or liberalized?" Of those responding to this question, 79 answered "yes" and 34 responded "no". Among the 37 who did not answer this question were a number who provided information in response to some of the specific questions which followed. One of these questions asked: "Is the previous scholastic record waived or liberalized?" Of the 100 providing some answer to this question, 74 indicated that some modification of the previous scholastic record requirement is made. Fourteen answered only "yes"; one stated that this requirement is waived, and 59 said that the requirement is liberalized. A few stated the nature of the modification, such as setting a lower grade point average or placing emphasis on improvement. Twenty-two also said that disadvantaged applicants who do not meet the normal admissions requirements may be admitted as provisional students with future status depending on the quality of their achievement during this initial work.

A third question in this section was. "Is the GRE or other admission test requirement waived or liberalized?" Sixty-nine of the 92 supplying answers to this question stated that the test requirement is either waived or the score interpretation is liberalized for disadvantaged applicants. Only six neither waive the requirement

nor interpret the scores differently than for other applicants. Of the 69 reporting modifications of usual requirements, nine said the requirement is waived; another nine stated that it is waived or liberalized but did not specify which procedure is followed, and 51 require the scores but liberalize interpretation. Examples given of liberalized interpretation included not specifying any minimum score requirement, setting a lower minimum score requirement than usual, or disregarding the scores received. Several other responses (none given by more than six people) were made to this question, such as test highly recommended, test optional, test required, and test not required (perhaps not of any applicant?).

A final question concerning the admission of disadvantaged students was: "Are other criteria (for admission) applied? Describe" Letters of recommendation were the most frequently cited additional criteria, being reported by 45 of the respondents. Mentioned next in frequency was a broad category including ability to do well in one's area of concentration, potential for growth and/or success (by 21); evidence of motivation, leadership, and maturity (by 15); working experience (by 11); and personal interviews (by 11). The respondents did not explain how such factors were evaluated. Mentioned by less than five respondents each were such factors as departmental recommendations, applicant's personal essay, and prior backgrounds.

Special Assistance Provisions

Following the questions concerning recruitment and admissions procedures for disadvantaged students, this inquiry sought information

about special provisions for the assistance of such students with respect to remedial services and financial support. The first question asked: "What remedial services, if any, are provided?" Although 24 of the respondents made no response to this question and another 21 stated that no such services are provided, the remaining reported a variety of types of assistance. Thirty-five reported that tutoring is available, without specifying areas, and several others listed areas such as English and reading. The tutoring is handled largely by faculty members and in a few cases by other graduate students. Some sort of adjustment of courses or program loads was also reported, the most frequently mentioned (by 34) being the taking of undergraduate level courses. Other modifications included a decreased program load and the offering of special courses. Counseling and advising were reported by 22 of the respondents. Summer programs were mentioned by nine and other remedial services (nature not specified) by seven. There were also seven who reported that special interest by faculty members is believed to be important.

Three questions dealing with financial support of disadvantaged students were asked. The first was "What financial support, if any, is provided?" Tuition aid was the most frequently mentioned type of financial aid available. This was listed on 70, or 47 percent, of the replies. Support for fees was reported by 49 respondents, or 33 percent. Aid toward room rental and board were also cited by 19 and 20 respectively. A total of 60 stated that other types of aid were available. Special stipends were mentioned by 21, assistantships by 12, fellowships by 11, and part-time jobs by five.

There were 15 others who reported that financial aid is available without specifying the type.

The approximate dollar value of financial support provided per student varied considerably for the graduate schools responding to this question (65 of the respondents did not supply information on this point). Only three stated that no financial aid is given. Thirteen simply said that the amount varies per student or that it constitutes a broad range. Among those reporting approximate dollar values, the amounts ranged from less that $500 to more than $5,000. The median amount was approximately $3,000. The time covered by these amounts was not given but is assumed in most cases to be a year.

The next question asked the source of funds. The lack of available funds for the financial assistance of disadvantaged students was mentioned by many as a major problem. The most common source of funds reported is the university itself. Sixty-four of those replying (43 percent) made a general statement concerning institutional funds as the source. Some reported departmental, graduate school, president's funds, and special fellowships or scholarships. Government funds were the next most frequently cited, the Federal Government being listed by 36 respondents and State Governments by 19. Foundations and friends of the university were also named as other sources of funds. Five cited Martin Luther King funds but did not state the original source of such.

Development and Growth of Procedures

Answers to the question "When were these procedures first established?" reveal that most of the procedures for accommodating disadvantaged graduate students have been established in recent years. Seventy-four, or 49 percent of the respondents, stated that the procedures reported were established in their graduate schools in 1967, 1968, or 1969. Seventeen reported that the procedures had been established between 1961 and 1966, and only 12 said that the procedures were in effect in 1960 or earlier.

Responses to the question asking "Have any changes been made since then?" indicate that modifications have been made by only a few of the institutions, probably because the procedures and programs are relatively new. Where changes have been made, the most frequently reported (by 16) is the expenditure of increased amounts of money. Also mentioned was some expansion of the program (by 10). Eight stated that their programs are being continually assessed and revised as seems desirable. Greater recruitment efforts and some administrative changes were reported by four each.

The graduate schools were also asked "Are changes contemplated for 1969-70?" About two-thirds of the respondents failed to answer this question or reported that no changes were contemplated. For the graduate schools planning changes, increased amounts of money was mentioned by 15, expansion of the program and more intensive efforts by eight, administrative changes (e.g., appointing a new administrator and involving students in the recruiting) by seven, greater recruitment efforts by six, and curriculum changes by three.

The inquiry next asked "Approximately how many students per year were so accommodated?" Many of the graduate schools reported that separate records were not kept and it was difficult to identify the disadvantaged students from the files. Accordingly, they were reluctant to report numbers or they emphasized that the numbers reported were only approximate. The data which were reported make it apparent that the numbers have been quite small. Prior to 1967, the number of disadvantaged students reported per institution by those which supplied data ranged from one or two to 25 or more. The number in the latter category increased from five for that period to 13 for 1967-68. There were 20 schools with 30 or more disadvantaged students in 1968-69 and 24 with 30 or more in 1969-70. Although the data are incomplete and subject to some inaccuracies, it is apparent that although the number of disadvantaged students accommodated is relatively small, the numbers are increasing. It may also be noted that in 1967 there were 30 schools reporting that no such students were enrolled and that for 1969-70 all schools expected to have some disadvantaged graduate students enrolled.

Success of Procedures or Programs

The final question in this inquiry asked: "Have you any estimate of the success of the procedures?" Most of the procedures and programs for disadvantaged graduate students have been established so recently that it is difficult, if not impossible, to evaluate their effectiveness as yet. This is revealed by the fact that 54 of the respondents did not answer the first part of the question dealing with student achievement and an additional 38 frankly stated that they didn't

know how successful their procedures have been. However, some respondents did attempt to provide some estimates.

With respect to student achievement, 41 reported that performance of the disadvantaged students has been excellent, good, satisfactory, or encouraging. Five stated that achievement is only moderate or a little less than average. Significantly, only five felt that the achievement of these students is low or not very successful. There were 11 who reported that the students are completing their degrees, while three said that they are not.

Concerning attrition, most of the respondents were unable to provide information: 66 did not make any response and another 33 said that it was too early to tell. Among the others responding to this question, 25 reported hardly any or no attrition and only two reported high attrition. Four reported satisfaction with the achievement and progress of the students and two were not satisfied. Compared with other students, six respondents said that attrition was higher for the disadvantaged students than for others, three said it was about the same, and two stated that attrition was less for their disadvantaged students than for the others.

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